

## **Norman L. Simmons Jr.**

Candidate for Rochester City Council

Northeast District

- Name one issue on which you disagree with the current administration and why.

I also don't agree with someone from the police force sitting on the PAB (*Police Accountability Board*), it defeats the purpose of having one. The Police Department needs a check and balance system giving the state of the relationship between officers and the community. In the northeast the relationship isn't there, so to ensure misconduct in their task as officers, having that check and balance is what holds an officer accountable when doing work. This should be made up of active stakeholders in the community. *(editor's note: the City Council proposal on the ballot allows for no more than one member to have a law enforcement background, as long as that is not with RPD and they have been out of the job for at least three years)*

- What is the most important issue facing your district, and what is a specific proposal or action you propose to address it?

There are many issues in my district but one for me is I do think the priorities as it relates to the Northeast District should be shifted. Cleaning up the area of used needles and the make up the area to make it more family relatable. There are people who won't walk outside in the area they stay because of the makeup of the area. There is a loss of culture, people taking in pride in the area they are from, so tapping into what's going well to help bring the community closer together by its citizens in the area. That's by pouring into those who may be coming out of jail trying to find their way, and also limited the panhandling in the area as well. We

need to start from the ground up to set in good habits for the Northeast.

So what can be done is continue to work with orgs such as Ibero, Action for a better community and many more to tap into the good that's already going on we just connect it all together to make it work for all. We try to reinvent the wheel a lot, my slogan of "common goal(s), shared Outcome(s) will only work working with others.

- Please identify one area in the city budget where you think the city should commit more resources than is currently proposed and why.

City Programming whether that be for youth or adults. I say this because we must start to prepare our children for the world and not let the environment in which they grow up in do so. That will also include working with the school board as a resource. We don't prepare our kids then they will continue to be a part of the problem in the Northeast area.

There is also a large number of the population in the Northeast on either parole, probation or somewhat connected to the Criminal Justice system which eats Hispanic and black children up. So being able to provide some type of programming or even Job opportunity to make them feel a part of the community then the things they may partake in may reflect that. Because if we don't meet them where they are the cycle will continue.

- What policies would you pursue to address housing affordability, evictions and/or landlord-tenant relations in your district?

I would want to explore the idea of tenants being able to take their landlord to court if needed. The northeast District are filled with landlords looking for money versus the upkeep of a property , a lot of times landlords don't even stay in the area so is not easy to contact, so to hold them accountable

being able to have that option for a tenant to take a landlord to court.

- Will you vote for the Police Accountability Board as proposed in November – why or why not?

Yes, as I stated before, given the state of the relations of Police in urban areas, there needs to be a check and balance system. I do not support anyone from law enforcement being a part of the process, would rather it be in the hands of community stakeholders.

- Do you support Mayor Warren's push for a referendum calling for removal of the elected school board in favor of a state takeover of RCSD/appointed board, and why?

No, I don't. I believe that it should remain local, to keep it inclusive to all mainly parents of the district. I will say I think there needs to maybe be an overall turn of leadership within the elected school board, and I'm optimistic that will happen.

- What current policy or practice of city government would you seek to change if (re)elected, and why?

There are many, but I will like to explore the number of marijuana arrests, and see what we can do to cut the number down. It puts so many of urban youth in the justice system and as the perception around the country is changing don't think our kids and community members should be so heavily criminalized, jai should not be the answer, they should start be connecting to resources to help.